What is claimed is:

1. An object-oriented test assessment system for use in assessing constructed responses to test prompts, comprising:

   a computer including an assessment program that relates received constructed responses to cases for assessment as an object, said cases having different states corresponding to the status of the case in the assessment process, said cases further being linked to the identity of the test taker who created a received constructed response, and a scoring model for discrete scorable classifications of said cases; and

   a database that stores the cases and permits the cases to be accessed.

2. An assessment system as in claim 1, wherein constructed responses relate to prompts, each prompt which, in turn, relates to at least one discrete scorable classification, said discrete scorable classifications being organized by said assessment program into sets of cases that are scored similarly.

3. An assessment system as in claim 2, wherein said scoring model and said discrete scorable classifications are associated with one another and said scoring model defines business rules for scoring the constructed responses associated with the discrete scorable classifications associated with that scoring model.

4. An assessment system as in claim 3, wherein the assessment program distributes the case using said business rules.

5. An assessment system as in claim 2, wherein the assessment program enables an assessor to create at least one scoring record that is linked to a corresponding case.

6. An assessment system as in claim 5, wherein the assessment program enables an assessor to create a scoring record including at least one of written commentary from

the assessor to justify a score, feedback commentary to the test taker, and a customizable form of scoring data.

7. As assessment system as in claim 2, wherein said database correlates said prompts to a discrete scorable classification tree based on how the constructed responses to the prompts are to be linked to a case, wherein branch nodes of said tree correspond to discrete scorable classifications having a common scoring model, and the leaf nodes of the tree correspond to the sets of cases scored similarly.

8. An assessment system as in claim 7, wherein each node inherits the properties of a parent node, whereby a scoring model linked to a branch node of said tree is used to score constructed responses to all prompts in leaf nodes of said branch node.

9. An assessment system as in claim 8, wherein a case is related to a corresponding discrete scorable classification for assessment by an assessor using the business rules inherited by said corresponding discrete scorable classification.

10. An assessment system as in claim 7, wherein constructed responses to multiple related prompts are grouped and scored as a single discrete scorable classification.

11. An assessment system as in claim 7, wherein a constructed response to a single prompt is scored as a discrete scorable classification.

12. An assessment system as in claim 7, wherein a constructed response to a prompt is scored using the business rules of a plurality of discrete scorable classifications.

13. An assessment system as in claim 7, wherein constructed responses to multiple related prompts are grouped and scored using the business rules of a plurality of discrete scorable classifications.

14. An assessment system as in claim 1, wherein said assessment program enables an administrator to access a case to modify the content of the case.

15. A method of assessing constructed responses to test prompts, comprising the steps of:
   relating received constructed responses to cases for assessment as an object, said cases having different states corresponding to the status of the case in the assessment process;
   linking said case to the identity of the test taker who created a received constructed response and a scoring model for discrete scorable classifications of said cases; and storing the case in a database.

16. An assessment method as in claim 15, wherein constructed responses relate to prompts, each prompt which, in turn, relates to at least one discrete scorable classification, comprising the further step of organizing said discrete scorable classifications into sets of cases that are scored similarly.

17. An assessment method as in claim 16, comprising the further step of associating said scoring model and said discrete scorable classifications with one another, wherein said scoring model defines business rules for scoring the constructed responses associate with the discrete scorable classifications associated with that scoring model.

18. An assessment method as in claim 17, comprising the further step of distributing the case using said business rules.

19. An assessment method as in claim 16, comprising the further step of enabling an assessor to create at least one scoring record that is linked to a corresponding case.

20. An assessment method as in claim 19, comprising the further step of enabling an assessor to create a scoring record including at least one of written commentary from the assessor to justify a score, feedback commentary to the test taker, and a customizable form of scoring data.

21. As assessment method as in claim 16, comprising the further step of correlating prompts to a discrete scorable classification tree based on how the constructed responses to the prompts are to be linked to a case, wherein branch nodes of said tree correspond to discrete scorable classifications having a common scoring model, and the leaf nodes of the tree correspond to the sets of cases scored similarly.

22. An assessment method as in claim 21, wherein each node inherits the properties of a parent node, comprising the step of using a scoring model linked to a branch node of said tree to score constructed responses to all prompts in leaf nodes of said branch node.

23. An assessment method as in claim 22, comprising the step of relating a case to a corresponding discrete scorable classification for assessment by the assessor using the business rules inherited by said corresponding discrete scorable classification.

24. An assessment method as in claim 21, comprising the steps of grouping constructed responses to multiple related prompts and scoring the grouped constructed responses as a single discrete scorable classification.

25. An assessment method as in claim 21, comprising the step of scoring a constructed response to a single prompt as a discrete scorable classification.

26. An assessment method as in claim 21, comprising the step of scoring a constructed response to a prompt using the business rules of a plurality of discrete scorable classifications.

27. An assessment method as in claim 21, comprising the steps of grouping constructed responses to multiple related prompts and scoring the grouped constructed responses using the business rules of a plurality of discrete scorable classifications.

28. An assessment method as in claim 15, comprising the further step of enabling an administrator to access a case to modify the content of the case.